

Exchange With Reporters in San Francisco October 4, 1993

Russia

Q. Did Yeltsin have a choice in using force in Moscow?

The President. I doubt it. Once they were armed, they were using their arms, they were hurting people. I just don't see that they had anyplace—he had those police officers instructed not to use force, and in fact, deployed in such a way that they couldn't effectively use force, and they were routed. I don't see that he had any choice at all.

Q. Does this taint the move toward democracy in Russia?

The President. No. I think, first of all, as I said today in my remarks, clearly, he bent over backwards to avoid doing this. And I think he may even wonder whether he let it go too far. But I think as long as his commitment is clear, to get a new constitution, to have new legislative elections, and have a new election for the Presidency, so he puts himself on the election block again, I don't think it does taint it.

Somalia

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. The only thing that I have authorized so far—and I want to say I'll be doing a lot more work on this today, later today, when I've got some time set aside to go back to work on it—the only thing I have done so far is to authorize the rangers that are there who are wounded or exhausted or done more than their fair share to be replaced, to roll over that group and then to send some more people there with some armored support so that we can have some more protection on the ground for our people. None of this happened when

we had 28,000 people there. And even though there are lots of U.N. forces there, not all of them are able to do what our forces did before. So I'm just not satisfied that the folks that are there now have the protection they need. So all I've authorized is a modest increase to provide armored support, to provide greater protection for the people over there trying to do their job.

This is not to signify some huge new commitment or offensive at this time, but I'm just not satisfied that the American soldiers that are there have the protection they need under present circumstances. So I've authorized, after consultation with the Secretary of Defense, a modest increase to get some more armored protection for them.

Q. Were any American soldiers taken hostage or taken captive by Aideed's forces?

The President. It is possible, and if it happened, we want there to be a very clear warning that those young soldiers who are there legally under international law, on behalf of the United Nations, and they are to be treated according to the rules of international law, which means not only no torture and no beating, but they're to have food and shelter and medical attention. They're to be treated in a proper way. And the United States will take a very firm view of anything that happens to the contrary. It is a very big issue. We'll probably have more to say about that later in the day.

NOTE: The exchange began at approximately 12:34 p.m. at the San Francisco Hilton. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks to the Community and an Exchange With Reporters in San Francisco October 4, 1993

The President. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. It's wonderful to see all of you here. I thank you for coming. I want to apolo-

gize for our lateness, but I have, as you might imagine, had to spend a little extra time this morning on events around the world which have